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Peer Bearing 1263-0104
PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

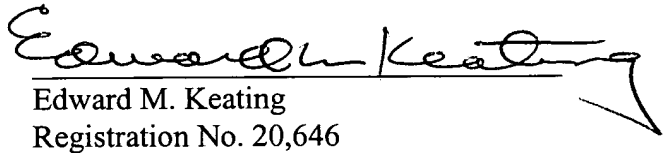
Applicant: LOUIS J. LENICK et al.] Examiner: William C. Joyce
Serial No.: 10/091,779] Art Unit: 3682
Filed: March 5, 2002]
For: BEARING ASSEMBLY]
AND LOCKING COLLAR]

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GROUP

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Commissioner for Patents
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

RESPONSE

This is in response to the Office Action of December 16, 2003. A reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1 and 2 of the application is requested.

In regard to the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mansfield (No. 3,276,828) in view of Rose (Patent No. 5,059,053), applicants agree with the Examiner's description of the disclosure of Mansfield as set forth in Section 2 of the Official Action but disagrees with the Examiner's contentions that it was known in the art to form a locking collar with a locating portion for positioning the collar with respect to a plurality of locking fingers or that the patent to Rose in any way teaches or suggests that it is combinable with the teachings of Mansfield to render applicants' claim 1 as obvious and unpatentable. Rose

is concerned with a positive stop clamp for clamping a cross-tube of a tie rod to a tie rod end. The tie rod is not a rotating part such as the shaft referred to in claim 1 of applicants' application. Accordingly, the clamp assembly 16, 16' of Rose would not be usable on a rotating shaft because of its ears 24 which are located asymmetrically relative to the axis of the shaft. Not only would the clamp assembly 16, 16' of Rose unbalance a rotating shaft but the extending ears 24 would also create a hazard to both equipment and workers because of their outward extensions. Additionally, while the clamping force provided by the nut and bolt assembly 34 acting through the ears 24 may provide sufficient clamping with the tie rod cross tube 12, which does not rotate except during adjustment of the tie rod ends 14 relative to the tie rod cross tube 12 prior to clamping, the nut and bolt assembly 34 would not provide uniform clamping for a locking collar on a rotating shaft. Therefore, there is no teaching or suggestion by Rose to modify the locking collar of Mansfield to render unpatentable claim 1 of this application.

A reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1 and 2 of this application under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Koss et al. (No. 4,403,814) in view of Rose (No. 5,059,053) is also requested. Applicants agree with the Examiner's characterization of Koss et al. as set forth in Section 3 of the Official Action, but for the reasons previously mentioned in regard to Rose, applicants do not agree that Rose is combinable with Koss et al. to render claims 1 and 2 unpatentable. As previously discussed, it would not be practical for one of ordinary skill in the art to replace the locking collar of Koss et al. with the compressable locking tube clamp of Rose for the reasons previously mentioned.

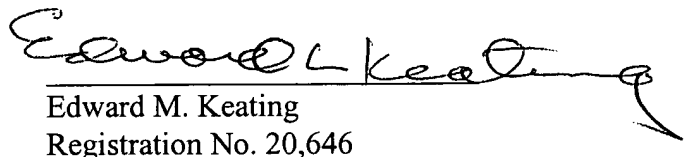
A reconsideration is also requested of the rejection of claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Larson (No. 5,630,671) in view of Rose (No. 5,059,053). It is not understood how either Larson or Rose teaches the invention claimed in

claims 1 and 2 of this application. Larson depends on an annular collar 18 made of a "thermoelastic" material such that an increase in temperature of the annular collar 18 decreases its circumference and causes a clamping surface to clamp against bearing inner ring surface 24. Thus, Larson does not depend upon a collar locking device for causing the diameter of the locking collar to compress, but instead relies on the material of the locking collar itself to shrink onto the bearing inner ring. It is not understood how Rose can be combined with Larson and, even if it could, the ears 24 of Rose would cause an unbalancing of a rotating shaft to which it would be attached, as well as a hazard to workers for the reasons discussed in regard to the first rejection contained in this Official Action. The Examiner's hypothetical combination is unworkable.

For the foregoing reasons, it is believed that the hypothetical combinations of the references set forth by the Examiner in Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the Official Action fail to teach or suggest the structure called or in claims 1 and 2 of this application.

For the foregoing reasons, a reconsideration and allowance of claims 1 and 2 are requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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